



Ut primum habeant: the early medieval church in Dalmatia and the Aquileian strategy

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In the ninth century, the church of Rome, having lost power in the Balkans in the iconoclastic period, struggled to maintain control over the eastern Adriatic coast, which was divided between the Byzantine and Frankish empires. The Dalmatian church hierarchy strived to preserve the integrity of their province under the authority of the archbishop of Spalatum, but was challenged by the bishop of Nona from the Slavic Duchy of the Croats, who claimed the metropolitan status for himself. Their conflict was resolved at the Councils of Spalatum in 925 and 928. The article re-examines the ninth- and tenth-century context for the councils, and suggests parallels between the Dalmatian case and the earlier debate between Cividale and Grado over metropolitan authority in the province of Aquileia. It demonstrates that the Dalmatian church may have followed an Aquileian precedent.

Dalmatia, once a very important Roman province, in the early medieval imperial world found itself on the periphery. Despite the decline, however, elements of its previous splendour, including in its church, persisted. Dalmatia was part of the diocese of Illyricum, which was under the jurisdiction of the Roman bishop until the iconoclastic era. Once Dalmatia was divided between the Byzantine and Frankish empires in the early ninth century, its church organization was split too, and a dispute arose between two Dalmatian bishops claiming the title of metropolitan. This controversy gave the pope the chance to unite the ecclesiastical province under his authority. This article chiefly examines ninth- and early tenth-century events in the eastern Adriatic region, a border zone between a new western world and Byzantine civilization, and draws parallels with the case of the reunion of the nearby church province of Aquileia in the first half of the ninth century. It contributes to the understanding of what actually happened

in Dalmatia in the mid-ninth century through to the first third of the tenth, and explains some of the mechanisms for maintaining church organization in the Adriatic area.

Thomas of Split (c.1200–68) reports in his *History of the Bishops of Salona and Split* that the metropolitan centre of Dalmatia was transferred from Salona, the former capital of this Roman province that was then devastated by barbarians, to the nearby palace of Emperor Diocletian (Spalatum, present-day Split in Croatia). The transferral was accomplished by John of Ravenna,¹ who had been sent by the pope.² This happened no earlier than the 640s.³ The pope consecrated John as bishop and granted the church of Spalatum all the ecclesiastical privileges of Salona. Archbishop John ‘restored churches, appointed bishops, established parishes’, and launched missionary work among the ‘ignorant’ Slavs, recently settled in Dalmatia.⁴

One of the components of John’s renovation programme was the translation of the remains of two saints: Domnius, the apostle Peter’s would-be disciple and first bishop of Salona, who was in reality an early fourth-century martyr,⁵ and Anastasius the Fuller, an early fourth-century Aquileian martyr.⁶ According to Thomas of Split, Archbishop John found their relics in the ruins of the abandoned city and brought them to Spalatum, thus justifying its metropolitan and apostolic status as successor to Salona.⁷ Thomas stresses that, despite

¹ The twenty-first-century trend in Croatian historiography is to identify him as Bishop John of Salona at the Council of Nicea in 787, to date a restoration of the Dalmatian dioceses to the late eighth century, and to fix restoration of metropolitan status to the time of the early tenth-century Councils of Spalatum: I. Basić, ‘New Evidence for the Re-establishment of the Adriatic Dioceses in the Late Eighth Century’, in M. Ančić *et al.* (eds), *Imperial Spheres and the Adriatic: Byzantium, the Carolingians and the Treaty of Aachen (812)* (London and New York, 2018), pp. 261–87.

² It was John IV (640–2) according to the *Historia Salonitana maior*, the first part (up to the late twelfth century) of Thomas of Split’s *History* with interpolated texts and some omissions. See *Historia Salonitana maior*, ed. N. Klaić (Beograd, 1967), p. 94 (hereafter *HSM*).

³ Radoslav Katičić tried to tie this story back to the seventh-century sources. See R. Katičić, ‘Vetustiores Ecclesiae Spalatensis Memoriae’, in *idem*, *Uz početke hrvatskih početaka: Filološke studije o našem najranijem srednjovjekovlju* (Split, 1993), pp. 99–130.

⁴ Thomas of Split, *Historia Salonitanorum pontificum atque Spalatensium*, ed. and trans. D. Karbić, M. Matijević Sokol and J.R. Sweeney (Budapest and New York, 2006), pp. 52–5: ‘Ipsi [to John of Ravenna] concessum est a sede apostolica, ut totius dignitatis priuilegium quod Salona antiquitus habuit, optineret ecclesia Spalatensium.’

⁵ V.B. Prozorov, ‘The *Passion* of St. Domnius: The Tradition of Apostolic Succession in Dalmatia’, *Scrinium* 2 (2006), pp. 219–39.

⁶ R. Egger, ‘Die *Passio Sancti Anastasii* und ihr Fortleben’, in *Forschungen in Salona* 3 (Vienna, 1939), pp. 131–48, and *Passio Anastasii*, ed. M. Cerno, *Le Passioni dei martiri aquileiesi e istriani*, ed. E. Colombi (Rome, 2013), vol. 2, pp. 825–900, which publishes the versions of nos. 414 and 415 from *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis*, ed. Socii Bollandiani (Brussels, 1898–9) [hereafter *BHL*].

⁷ Thomas, *Historia*, pp. 56–7.

their residence in Spalatum, the archbishops 'were not styled archbishops of Spalatum but archbishops of Salona'.⁸

A number of authors consider that this metropolitan succession of the church of Spalatum soon after the destruction of Salona is an intentional anachronism.⁹ They point to canon 1 of the Council of Spalatum in 925 as evidence of Spalatum's later elevation to metropolitan status:

Since long ago blessed Domnius was sent by Peter the Apostle to preach in Salona, and he arranged that this church and city, where his holy remains rest, should have primacy among all the churches in this province and legitimately acquire the name of the metropolis over all the dioceses, therefore, at the command of its bishops, who by divine grace possess this see, the council and consecration of the bishops shall be celebrated.¹⁰

In the time between John of Ravenna's activity and the Council of Spalatum, evidence appeared of a struggle between two bishoprics for metropolitan authority in Dalmatia. On one side was the bishop of Spalatum, and on the other, the bishop of Nona (present-day Nin in Croatia). This controversy started in the last third of the ninth century, while Dalmatia was divided into two political entities: the Byzantine province of seaport towns, and the Frankish-allied Duchy of the Croats.

This article provides a context for understanding the conflict between the bishops of Spalatum and Nona. Their dispute was resolved in favour of the archbishop resident in Spalatum at the Councils of Spalatum in 925 and 928. Since the coverage of these events in the extant texts is incomplete, and the acts of the Councils of Spalatum are preserved in manuscripts not earlier than the beginning of the sixteenth century, in order to interpret and justify the Dalmatian case parallels are drawn between it and the earlier debate between Cividale and Grado over metropolitan authority in the province of Aquileia. A certain similarity in approaches in both controversies allows us to surmise that the

⁸ Thomas, *Historia*, pp. 58–9: 'Ipsi autem archiepiscopi non spatatenses sed salonitani appellabantur.'

⁹ For relevant references, see F. Curta, *Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages (500–1300)*, 2 vols (Leiden and Boston, 2019), vol. 1, pp. 326–9.

¹⁰ *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, vol. 1 (Diplomata annorum 743–1100. continens) [hereafter CD I], ed. M. Kostrenčić *et al.* (Zagreb, 1967), no. 23, p. 31: 'Quoniam antiquitus beatus Domnius ab apostolo Petro predicare Salonam missus est constituitque, ut ecclesia ipsa et ciuitas ubi sancta eius membra requiescunt inter omnes ecclesias prouintie huius primatis (!) habeant et metropolis nomine super omnes episcopatus legitime sortiatur.'

contenders followed a paradigm that was adopted in the Frankish-controlled Adriatic littoral, and that the Dalmatian churches drew on the experience of Aquileia, whose patriarch was directly involved in their affairs.

The first part of the article discusses the ninth-century documents relative to the controversy in Dalmatia and reviews the ecclesiastical history of this province in the Carolingian period. It demonstrates that both the local hierarchs and papal Rome continued to regard Dalmatia as a metropolitan province as it had been in late antiquity, although it was politically divided into the Byzantine territory comprising the coastal towns, and the Slavic Duchy of the Croats under Frankish authority. In this situation, a conflict over the metropolitan status arose between the 'archiepiscopal' Spalatum and the 'bishopric of the Croats' in the ducal residence, Nona.

This first section is based on the reliable letters of Popes Nicholas I, John VIII and Stephen V,¹¹ and the two charters of the Croatian dukes Trpimir and Muncimir extant in five manuscripts, the earliest of which dates to 1568. The authenticity of the ducal charters is debatable, but they are considered reliable (even though recast and possibly interpolated) sources, since they conform to the practice of the time of granting privileges to the church, and contain certain features related to the political and ecclesiastical conditions in ninth-century Dalmatia.¹²

The second section explains how and on what grounds the Councils of Spalatum in 925 and 928 sanctioned the metropolitan authority of the see of Spalatum in Dalmatia and abolished its contestant, the bishopric of Nona. The analysis draws upon conciliar decrees and papal epistles that have been preserved in the *Historia Salonitana maior* and reached us in much later manuscripts.¹³ Although their reliability was challenged in

¹¹ On John VIII's *Register*, see D. Lohrmann, *Das Register Papst Johannes' VIII (872–882). Neue Studien zur Abschrift Reg. Vat. I, zum verlorenen Originalregister und zum Diktat der Briefe* (Tübingen, 1968); on the *Collectio Britannica* that includes excerpts from Stephen V's letters, C. Rolker, 'History and Canon Law in the *Collectio Britannica*. A New Date for London, BL Add. 8873', in B.C. Brasington and K.G. Cushing (eds), *Bishops, Texts and the Use of Canon Law around 1100: Essays in Honour of Martin Brett* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 141–52.

¹² For relevant references, see M. Matijević Sokol, '1150. obljetnica darovnice kneza Trpimira' [The 1150th Anniversary of Duke Trpimir's Donation], *Izdanja Hrvatskog arheološkog društva* 25 (2010), pp. 9–18.

¹³ The documents are published in *HSM* (pp. 94–106) and *CD I* (22–7, pp. 28–39). The earliest version of the *Historia Salonitana maior*, where they are preserved, dates from the early sixteenth century (Rome, Archive of the *Congregatio de propaganda fide*, 264, III. Albania, Macedonia, Serbia, Dalmatia et Illyrico 1648, pp. 607–51). The MS facsimile can be found in *HSM*.

historiography,¹⁴ recent scholarship advances numerous convincing arguments for their trustworthiness.¹⁵ Thomas of Split does not mention the councils in his *History*, but he refers to the controversy between Archbishop John of Spalatum and Bishop Gregory of Nona, when he writes about the re-establishment of the bishopric of Nona at the Synod of Spalatum in 1076.¹⁶ The see of Nona did not exist between 928 and 1076, and after that its bishop was suffragan in the province of Dalmatia, without metropolitan ambitions.

The third part of the article dwells on the parallels between those strategies for claiming metropolitan authority in Dalmatia in the 870s–920s, and those employed in Aquileia in the first third of the ninth century. These parallels help us to understand better various aspects of the debate in Dalmatia, which had long-standing hagiographic, artistic, and political ties with Aquileia. In the second half of the ninth century, after having maintained his prerogatives throughout almost the whole province of late antique Aquileia, its patriarch consecrated the archbishop of Spalatum's rival, the bishop of

¹⁴ I. Lucius, *Inscriptiones Dalmaticae* (Venice, 1673), p. 73; J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans la province romaine de Dalmatie* (Paris, 1906), p. 149, n. 2; I. Kršnjavi, *Zur Historia Salonitana des Thomas Archidiaconus von Spalato* (Zagreb, 1900), pp. 7–8; I. Babić, 'Splitske uspomene na salonitanske kršćanske starine' [Le memorie spalatine delle antichità cristiane di Salona], *Vjesnik za arheologiju u historiju dalmatinsku* 85 (1992), pp. 13–57, at p. 15. The most ardent, though unconvincing, attempt to discredit their reliability was made by Kerubin Šegvić. See K. Šegvić, *Borba za hrvatsko bogoslužje i Grgur Ninski ili skižma u Hrvatskoj i Dalmaciji 1059–1075* [The Struggle for Croatian Liturgy and Gregory of Nin, or a Schism in Croatia and Dalmatia in 1059–1075] (Zagreb, 1930).

¹⁵ Radoslav Katičić, Hrvoje Gračanin and Marko Petrak interpret the papal letters related to the Councils of Spalatum, especially the use of the term *Methodii doctrina*, in the context of ninth-century Roman policy and the religious situation in central Europe. See R. Katičić, 'Methodii doctrina', *Slovo* 36 (1986), pp. 11–44; *idem*, 'Dopuna članku "Methodii doctrina"' [Ergänzung zum Aufsatz 'Methodii doctrina'], *Slovo* 39–40 (1990), pp. 23–5; H. Gračanin and M. Petrak, 'The Notion of the *Methodii Doctrina* in the Context of the Church Synod of Split (AD 925)', in *Vizantiskata misionerska dejnost i evropskoto nasledstvo* [The Byzantine Missionary Activity and Its Legacy in Europe] (Skopje, 2017), pp. 28–42. On various aspects of the councils at Spalatum and their contextualization, see A. Matanić (ed.), *Vita religiosa morale e sociale ed i concili di Split (Spalato) dei secc. X–XI* (Padua, 1982). I have elsewhere examined several canons in the acts of the council of 925, exploring them from the point of view of ninth- to tenth-century ecclesiastical legal practice: see V. Prozorov, 'The Tenth-Century Councils in Split and the Problem of the Reliability of Their Acts', *Crkvene Studije* 10 (2013), pp. 275–87. Ivan Basić argues that Thomas of Split not only knew about the controversy between the bishops of Spalatum and Nona and its outcome, but also had access to the tenth-century conciliar acts. See I. Basić, 'Prilog kritici intertekstualnosti kronike *Historia Salonitana* i kolektaneja *Historia Salonitana Maior*' [A Contribution to the Critique of the Intertextuality of the Chronicle of the *Historia Salonitana* and the Collecton of the *Historia Salonitana Maior*], in D. Agičić *et al.* (eds), *Zbornik Drage Roksandića* (Zagreb, 2019), pp. 655–76.

¹⁶ Thomas, *Historia*, pp. 86–9: 'In hac synodo restauratus est episcopatus Nonensis, cuius episcopus Gregorius multas olim molestias Iohannem Spalatensem archiepiscopum sustinere fecit debitam ei subtrahendo obedientiam et sibi ius metropoliticum indebite vendicando.'

Nona, as metropolitan. Dalmatian prelates could deploy the elements of the Aquileian ideological argumentation to consolidate their own province, torn by Frankish expansion and Croat settlement. These parallels reveal somewhat similar approaches to resolving disputes over metropolitan rights in the Adriatic coastal areas on the south-eastern Frankish frontier, and thus justify the plausibility of these events. The sources for this section, besides the acts of the Councils of Spalatum, are the acts of the Council of Mantua in 827. They are contained in a fifteenth-century manuscript, but their authenticity is quite certain.¹⁷

The ninth century in Dalmatia: in search of a new balance

After the conclusion, in 812, of the treaty of Aachen between the Byzantine and Frankish empires, Dalmatia was divided between them (Fig. 1). Its fortified coastal centres remained under Byzantium and guarded the sea route to Venice. Some of them, such as Iadera (present-day Zadar), Tragurium (Trogir) and Ascrivium (Kotor), were the old Roman towns that continued to exist from antiquity. The others, such as Spalatum and Ragusa (Dubrovnik), emerged at more secure sites as heirs to decayed and ruined harbour centres (Salona, the former provincial capital, and Epidaurus, respectively). Towards the mid-ninth century, this Dalmatia formed a Byzantine province (*archontia*, later *theme* and *katepanate*) administered from Iadera.¹⁸

Constantine Porphyrogenitus and Thomas of Split evidence that from the seventh century the Dalmatian countryside was populated by Slavs, and that among them were the Croats. According to Constantine's *On the Administration of the Empire*, the latter were invited to the Balkans from central Europe by Emperor Heraclius and were even baptized by priests from Rome.¹⁹ Their ethnogenesis and

¹⁷ W. Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeit im Frankenreich und in Italien* (Paderborn, 1989), pp. 177–8; C. Azzara, 'Il concilio di Mantova del 6 giugno 827', in G. Andenna *et al.* (eds), *Le origini della diocesi di Mantova e le sedi episcopali dell'Italia settentrionale (IV–XI secolo)* (Trieste, 2006), pp. 61–72; G. Vocino, 'Les saints en lice: hagiographie et reliques entre Cividale et Grado à l'époque carolingienne', in P. Depreux *et al.* (eds), *Compétition et sacré au haut Moyen Âge: entre médiation et exclusion* (Turnhout, 2015), pp. 273–94.

¹⁸ The first *strategos* of Dalmatia was attested under Emperor Basil I, in 878, but the *theme* could have been established earlier, in the time of Michael III (842–67). See a discussion of contradictory data from Dalmatia in the second half of the ninth century in V. Prigent, 'Notes sur l'évolution de l'administration byzantine en Adriatique (VIIIe–IXe siècle)', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome – Moyen Âge* 120.2 (2008), pp. 393–417, at pp. 408–16.

¹⁹ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, c. 31, ll. 1–24, ed. Gy. Moravcsik, trans. R.J.H. Jenkins (Washington, DC, 1967), pp. 146–9.



Fig 1 Dalmatia in the ninth and early tenth centuries

ethnic identity, as well as the ethnic history of post-Roman Dalmatia, are debatable issues in current historiography, although there is no doubt that in the ninth century the Croats who established their own polity in the countryside were regarded from the outside as Slavs and allies of the Franks.²⁰

According to Thomas of Split, the metropolitan ecclesiastical province of Dalmatia that existed in late antiquity was restored soon after the inhabitants of the ruined Salona had settled at the site of Diocletian's palace, presumably in the seventh century.²¹ This site, Spalatum, became the new metropolitan centre. More evidence regarding metropolitan jurisdiction in seventh- to eighth-century Dalmatia is not

²⁰ See the intricate debates on the *origo gentis* of the Croats and their relations with the Franks and relevant references in: D. Dzino, *Becoming Slav, Becoming Croat: Identity Transformations in Post-Roman and Early Medieval Dalmatia* (Leiden and Boston, 2010), esp. pp. 118–210; Curta, *Eastern Europe*, vol. 1, pp. 65–9.

²¹ Thomas, *Historia*, pp. 52–5. Constantine Porphyrogenitus (*De administrando imperio*, 31.21–24, pp. 148–9) also states that Heraclius 'brought priests from Rome, and made of them an archbishop and a bishop and presbyters and deacons'.

available, except for the appearance of the archbishop of Salona in the late eighth-century inscription from Split,²² and in the acts of the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 as being amongst eastern prelates of archiepiscopal rank.²³ This raises doubts if the metropolitan province existed in Dalmatia in that period.

The ecclesiastical organization of Dalmatia left many more traces in the ninth century. The charter issued on 4 March 852²⁴ by Croat Duke Trpimir (*Trepimirus*) affirms Archbishop Peter of Salona's perpetual ownership of some property and the church of St George of Putalj with its possessions and revenues in the Duchy of the Croats.²⁵ The charter incorporates the request of the archbishop, who defined his province as 'the metropolis extending up to the bank of the Danube and through almost all the realm of the Croats'.²⁶ Although his claim to the lands up to the Danube seems to have been an exaggeration, the archbishop exercised his spiritual power over the Croats in Dalmatia. Trpimir's charter suggests close relations between the archbishop and the Croat duke, who called Peter his 'dear godfather' (*dilectus compater*). The association of the see of Salona with the 'cenoby of Saints Domnius, Anastasius, Cosmas and Damian' in Spalatum, indicates that at that time it was the archiepiscopal residence.²⁷

In the mid-ninth century, a bishopric was established in one of the centres of the Croat polity in Dalmatia, Nona or Aenona (about ten miles north of Zadar).²⁸ From a letter of Pope Nicholas I (858–67), partly preserved in Deusdedit's *Collectio Canonum*, it can be deduced that the bishopric had been founded without the knowledge of the papacy. Nicholas poses the following question to the clergy and people

²² I. Basić, 'Prilozi proučavanju crkve Svetog Mateja u Splitu' [A Contribution to the Study of the Church of Saint Matthew in Split], *Ars Adriatica* 1 (2011), pp. 67–96: 'Hic requiescet fragelis et inutelis Iohannis peccator harchiepiscopus.'

²³ J. Darrouzès, 'Listes épiscopales du concile de Nicée (787)', *Revue des études byzantines* 33 (1975), pp. 24–6, 59–60.

²⁴ Ljudo Margetić dated it to 840: L. Margetić, 'Bilješke uz Trpimirovu ispravu (CD I, 3–8)' [Notes to Trpimir's Charter (CD I, 3–8)], *Zbornik radova Pravnog fakulteta u Splitu* 30.1 (1993), pp. 47–51. Mirjana Matijević Sokol dated it to 841: Matijević Sokol, '1150. obljetnica', pp. 9–18.

²⁵ CD I, 3, pp. 3–8.

²⁶ CD I, 3, p. 5: 'metropolis usque ripam Danubii et pene per totum regnum Chroatorum'.

²⁷ I. Basić, 'Pagan Tomb to Christian Church: The Case of Diocletian's Mausoleum in Spalatum', in M. Sághy et al. (eds), *Pagans and Christians in the Late Roman Empire. New Evidence, New Approaches (4th–8th Centuries)* (Budapest, 2017), pp. 241–71, at pp. 265–8.

²⁸ Most scholars date the foundation of the bishopric of Nona to the mid-ninth century: N. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata u ranom srednjem vijeku* [A History of the Croats in the Early Middle Ages] (Zagreb, 1971), pp. 232–9; N. Budak, *Prva stoljeća Hrvatske* [The First Centuries of Croatia] (Zagreb, 1994), pp. 92–6; T. Vedriš, 'Crkva i vjerski život' [The Church and Religious Life], in Z. Nikolić Jakus (ed.), *Nova zračka u europskom svjetlu. Hrvatske zemlje u ranome srednjem vijeku (oko 550 – oko 1150)* (Zagreb, 2015), pp. 210–12.

of Nona: how can a church as a congregation of Catholics be established without papal sanction when even a new basilica cannot be built without his decision?²⁹

The next involvement of Rome in Dalmatia's affairs was the consecration of Theodosius, the first known bishop of Nona. From the letters of Pope John VIII in 879, one can conclude that Theodosius' predecessors had been consecrated by the Roman pontiff³⁰ and he himself visited Rome to receive his consecration.³¹ At that time, the bishopric of Nona presumably enjoyed an autonomous status in Dalmatia, which constituted a part of former Roman Illyricum and was regarded by Pope John VIII as an area of Roman jurisdiction. In the instruction of May 873 to his ambassador (Bishop Paul of Ancona) to Louis the German, the king of East Francia, John claimed that 'within the confines of Illyricum the Apostolic See long ago had been accustomed to make consecrations, ordinations and other arrangements'.³²

In 879, in his letters to Pope John, Duke Branimir (*Branimirus*) of the Croats confirmed the loyalty of his people to the Roman church.³³ Perhaps this pledge had been tested when his predecessor and Trpimir's son, Duke Zdeslav (*Sedesclavus*), came to power over Croatia with Byzantine support.³⁴ Only a few mentions of Zdeslav survive, therefore one can only speculate that he tried to change the allegiance of the church in the Duchy of the Croats, attempting a switch from Rome to Constantinople.³⁵ Constantine Porphyrogenitus' narrative about the Christianization of these Croats, who still remained heathen under

²⁹ Pope Nicholas I, *Epistola* 140, ed. E. Perels, *MGH Epistolae* 6 (Berlin, 1925), p. 659: 'Ecclesia, id est catholicorum collectio, quomodo sine apostolicae sedis instituatur nutu, quando iuxta sacra decreta nec ipsa debet absque preceptione Papae basilica nouiter construi, que ipsam catholicorum intra semet amplecti cateruam dinoscitur?' On the manuscripts of Deusdedit's *Collectio* (the earliest one dates to 1099–1118), see L. Kéry, *Canonical Collections of the Early Middle Ages (ca. 400–1140): A Bibliographical Guide to the Manuscripts and Literature* (Washington, DC, 1999), pp. 228–33.

³⁰ Pope John VIII, *Epistola* 191 (7 June 879), ed. E. Caspar, *MGH Epistolae* 7 (Berlin, 1928), p. 153: 'monemus . . . toto corde totaque voluntate ad gremium sedis apostolicę unde antecessores tui diuinę legis dogmata melliflua cum sacrę institutionis forma summique sacerdotii honorem sumpserunt, redeas'.

³¹ John VIII, *Epistola* 295, p. 258: 'Audita per Theodosium, venerabilem episcopum vestrum, fide et deuotione, quam circa sedem beati Petri apostoli et nostri pontificii vos habere cognoscimus.'

³² Pope John VIII, *Fragmenta* 21, ed. E. Caspar, *MGH Epistolae* 7 (Berlin, 1928), p. 284: 'intra totius Illyrici fines consecrationes ordinationes et dispositiones apostolica sedes patrare antiquitus consuevit'.

³³ John VIII, *Epistolae* 206, pp. 165–6; 190, pp. 151–2 (*CD* I, 10, p. 13; II, p. 14).

³⁴ Giovanni Diacono, *Istoria Veneticorum* II.21, ed. L.A. Berto (Bologna, 1999), p. 140.

³⁵ The letter of Pope John VIII (early 879) to 'dear son *Sedesclavus*, glorious *comes* of the Slavs', shows that the relations between Rome and Croatia were not interrupted during Zdeslav's short reign: John VIII, *Epistola* 184, p. 147 (*CD* I, 9, p. 12).

Emperor Basil I (867–86), may be related to Zdeslav's pro-Byzantine policy and Basil's attempts to win the Croats to his side.³⁶

When Zdeslav was deposed and murdered,³⁷ it seemed necessary for Branimir to bring the Croats back under the patronage of Rome. Another explanation is also possible. Branimir usurped the throne from Zdeslav, Trpimir's son and legal heir, and in order to legitimize his power hurried to assure the Roman church of his people's fidelity. Anyway, the pope welcomed Branimir and gave the Croats his blessing.³⁸

In 879, John VIII also urged the Dalmatian bishops to return to the fold of the Roman church, stressing that their predecessors were guided by Roman authority. He encouraged the bishops and people to elect an archbishop, who would accept consecration and the pallium from the pope 'according to ancient tradition'.³⁹ In the ninth century, the pallium was conferred on any metropolitan bishop as a sign of his jurisdiction over the province, after submitting his relevant request with the profession of faith in Rome, usually in person. John VIII was the pope who sought to make the pallium a symbol of metropolitan rank.⁴⁰ It is unknown whether the archbishop in Dalmatia had ever received consecration from any other centre than Rome. However, the pope suspected that the Dalmatian bishops 'hesitated to revert to us, to obtain consecration and the pallium due to something from the side of the Greeks or Slavs'.⁴¹ Thus, the papal epistle hints at an estrangement of Dalmatian dioceses from the Roman church in the second half of the ninth century.

When John VIII wrote this letter, 'the Holy See of Salona' was obviously vacant and the bishop of Iadera was listed first among the Dalmatian bishops, since he was the senior bishop after the archbishop

³⁶ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, 29.54–78, pp. 124–7; T. Živković, 'On the Baptism of the Serbs and Croats in the Time of Basil I (867–886)', *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana* 1 (January–June 2013), pp. 33–53, at pp. 41–2.

³⁷ Giovanni Diacono, *Istoria* III.25, p. 142.

³⁸ John VIII, *Epistolae* 206, pp. 165–6; 190, pp. 151–2; 295, pp. 257–8 (*CD* I, 10–11, pp. 13–15; 14, pp. 18–19). Roberto Cessi and Mladen Ančić argue that Byzantine power in Dalmatia ceased after Zdeslav's death: R. Cessi, 'La Dalmazia e Bisanzio nel sec. XI', *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti. Classe di scienze morali, lettere ed arti* 125 (1967), pp. 89–114, at pp. 100–1; M. Ančić, 'The Waning of the Empire. The Desintegration of Byzantine Rule on the Eastern Adriatic in the Ninth Century', *Hortus artium medievalium* 4 (1998), pp. 15–24.

³⁹ John VIII, *Epistola* 196, p. 157.

⁴⁰ S.A. Schoenig, *Bonds of Wool. The Pallium and Papal Power in the Middle Ages* (Washington, DC, 2016), pp. 117–78.

⁴¹ John VIII, *Epistola* 196, p. 157: 'Porro si aliquid de parte Grecorum vel Sclavorum super vestra ad nos reversione vel consecratione aut de pallii perceptione dubitatis, scitote pro certo, quoniam nos secundum sanctorum patrum decessorumque nostrorum pontificum statuta vos adiuvere auctoritate curabimus.'

of Salona.⁴² The special reference to 'Archpriest John of the Holy See of Salona' assumes the exceptional status of the metropolitan church of Salona. Moreover, the precedence of the priests and *potentes* of Spalatum over those of Iadera indicates that the former centre was more important, in the eyes of the pope, than the latter.

A new archbishop was elected. Thomas of Split writes that 'Marinus was archbishop in the time of King Charles and Duke Branimir of *Sclavonia*.'⁴³ The mention of the Frankish king together with the duke of the Croats obviously means that Thomas in the thirteenth century knew that Dalmatian Croatia remained under Frankish sovereignty in the 870–80s.⁴⁴ Bishop Marinus' name appears in Pope Stephen V's letter of 886.⁴⁵

The pope addressed this to the above-mentioned Theodosius, bishop of Nona, who succeeded Marinus and asked the patriarch of Aquileia, the closest metropolitan centre in the territories of the Franks (the Croats' senior allies), for consecration. Patriarch Walpert consecrated Theodosius as archbishop of Salona and was reproached by Pope Stephen for intruding into another's province.⁴⁶ Four things are notable here. First, the pope referred to the information that Theodosius simultaneously held the sees of Nona and Spalatum. Second, for the first time the see located in Spalatum is called the church of Spalatum, not of Salona. Third, Theodosius sought consecration from the Aquileian patriarch, while the pope insisted that it should be performed by him. Fourth, Theodosius was consecrated archbishop of Salona. And he retained this dignity. Later, in 887/8, Pope Stephen encouraged Theodosius' zeal in restoring churches in the province, with these significant words: 'We wish very much that the church of Salona, which, as you say, has been restored, would return to its previous

⁴² John VIII, *Epistola* 196, p. 157: 'Reverentissimis et sanctissimis episcopis Vitali Iadransi, Dominico Absarensi ceterisque episcopis Dalmatinis seu Iohanni archipresbytero sanctę sedis Salonitanę omnibusque sacerdotibus et senioribus populi habitatoribus Spalatensis civitatis atque Zadarensis ceterarumque civitatum.'

⁴³ Thomas, *Historia*, pp. 58–9: 'Marinus archiepiscopus fuit tempore Caroli regis et Branimiri ducis Sclauonie.'

⁴⁴ Charles the Fat was king of Alemmania (Swabia) from 876, king of Italy from 880, and emperor from 881. See S. MacLean, *Kingship and Politics in the Late Ninth Century. Charles the Fat and the End of the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge, 2003).

⁴⁵ Pope Stephen V, *Fragmenta* 9, ed. E. Caspar, *MGH Epistolae* 7 (Berlin, 1928), p. 338: 'Quis vice Marini episcopi in ecclesie Spalatinae regimen successerit diligentius perimantes, te curam illius ecclesie suscepisse audivimus, cumque et quod de tibi commissa ordinaveris studiosius investigaremus, dictum est utrisque praeesse . . . ad Aquilegensis diceris convolasse ecclesiam et exinde consecrationem suscepisse, quam in sede beati Petri ab apostolicis, debueras manibus petere, in quo et te deviasse et eum excessisse luce patet clarius.'

⁴⁶ Stephen V, *Fragmenta* 24, p. 346.

state.⁴⁷ As Theodosius wanted to obtain the pallium from the pope, Stephen promised to confer it on him upon his arrival in Rome, thus legitimizing Theodosius' metropolitan claim in Dalmatia.

All these facts can be explained in the following way. When Spalatum, together with other Dalmatian coastal towns, suspended its relations with Rome in the second half of the ninth century, its church was no longer considered a successor to the archbishopric of Salona and the pope therefore called it the church of Spalatum. Since only Nona remained under western ecclesiastical authority and its diocese was spread over the territory of the Dalmatian Croat duchy, its bishop claimed the legacy of the church of Salona, whose ruins were situated within the borders of Dalmatian Croatia, and was finally able to secure papal approval and the pallium. This hypothesis explains Theodosius' words about the church of Salona quoted in the letter of Pope Stephen V. When the pope enquired who had been elected bishop of Spalatum after Marinus, he found out that Theodosius of Nona had been uncanonically consecrated as archbishop by the Frankish patriarch of Aquileia; however, Theodosius himself presented this act in terms of the restoration of the metropolitan church of Salona.

In this light, further conflicts become clearer. On 28 October 892, the Croatian duke Muncimir (*Muncimirus*) confirmed his father Trpimir's donation of 852 to the church of Salona. This charter reveals a controversy between the churches of Spalatum and Nona concerning Trpimir's grant. Both bishops submitted claims to the church of St George of Putalj (*Sancti Georgii de Putalio*), mancipated by Trpimir to the church of Salona. The argument put forward by Bishop Aldefred of Nona in 892 was that the church of St George 'is not a possession of the church of Spalatum; rather, it is retained in ownership by our church and should not be in the possession of the church of Saints Domnius and Anastasius since it had been given for temporary use to the head of this church'.⁴⁸ His words can be explained by the assumption that, in Aldefred's opinion, Trpimir donated the church of St George to the church of Salona, whose see was at that time at Spalatum where the relics of Sts Domnius and Anastasius had been already deposited. Later, the church of Salona was 'restored' to its

⁴⁷ Stephen V, *Fragmenta* 30, p. 351: 'Salonitana ecclesia, quam Deo auxiliante restitutam asseris, ut ad pristinum gradum redeat, inhianter cupimus et omnes ecclesiae, quae barbarorum rabie destructae sunt, assiduus precibus ut restaurentur imploramus, ita tamen ut in novarum ecclesiarum restauratione neglectus non proveniat antiquarum. Pallium et eius usum, quem rogitas, cum Dei misericordia cooperante ipse ad apostolorum limina veneris, consultius dabitur.'

⁴⁸ CD I, 20, p. 23: 'Non ita habetur, sed nostre potius ecclesiae dominio detinetur, quoniam non in ecclesia sanctorum Domnii et Anastasii, ut dicitis, possidenda, sed ipsius presuli fruenda ad tempus tradita est.'

original site by Bishop Theodosius of Nona, who received the papal sanction, and the church of St George located in Croat territory came under his authority. This could lead to confusion. Despite Aldefred's objections, Duke Muncimir confirmed the donation *in posterum*, for the future, 'to the cenoby of Saints Domnius, Anastasius, Cosmas and Damian', i.e. to the see of Spalatum.⁴⁹

To sum up, this section has focussed on the sparse documentation concerning the ninth-century church province of Dalmatia, which Rome continued to treat as a separate metropolitan unit headed by the archbishop of Salona, who was entitled to receive the pallium. Salona itself lay in ruins at that time, and the church of nearby Spalatum claimed its succession. However, an estrangement arose between this province and Rome, perhaps due to political division. While coastal towns such as Spalatum remained part of the Byzantine empire, the large territory of Dalmatia fell under the power of Frankish rulers. The Slavic Croats, who also came under Frankish sovereignty, formed the duchy on these lands and most likely possessed the remains of Salona. In the last third of the ninth century, the bishop of Nona, the newly established episcopal see in the Croat duchy, after having undertaken some restoration work on the site of Salona, challenged the metropolitan rights claimed by the church of Spalatum. He was ordained archbishop of Salona by the nearest friendly archbishop, the Frankish patriarch of Aquileia. Thus, by the end of the ninth century, a fight broke out between the bishops of Spalatum and Nona for the metropolitan status of the church of Salona. This struggle continued even in new circumstances, after the Franks vanished from Dalmatia and the Croat duchy became independent.

The Councils of Spalatum in 925 and 928: restoring unity

The conflict between the churches of Spalatum and Nona was discussed at the councils of Spalatum in 925 and 928. Before that, Dalmatian bishops, with Archbishop John of Salona (his residence in Spalatum) at the head, and the two Slavic rulers, *Rex* Tomislav (*Tamisclaus*) of the Croats and Duke Michael of Zachlumians,⁵⁰ appealed to Pope John X asking him to send his legates and 'admonition containing the teaching of Christian religion' ('monitorium christiane religionis dogma

⁴⁹ On the association of Sts Domnius, Anastasius, Cosmas, and Damian with the cathedral of Split, see I. Ostojić, *Benediktinci u Hrvatskoj* [The Benedictines in Croatia] (Split, 1964), vol. 2, pp. 367–8.

⁵⁰ Their duchy stretched from the Neretva River to the hinterland of Dubrovnik. See S. Ćirković, 'Zahumlje', in *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (Stuttgart and Weimar, 1999), vol. 9, col. 468.

continentem'). The pope dispatched Bishops John of Ancona and Leo of Palestrina with his letters concerning the liturgical use of Slavonic in the metropolis of Salona.⁵¹ John of Spalatum is called archbishop of Salona in the papal letter, although he had still not received the pallium from the pope, who reproached him for not having visited Rome in a long time.

John X's preconiliar letters do not refer to any jurisdictional dispute in Dalmatia. He highlights the idea that the Roman church is the mother church for the *regna* of the Slavs, who are its 'most special sons'; he expects their loyalty and urges them to retain the Latin language in Divine worship.⁵² John points to an untenable *Methodii doctrina* spreading across Dalmatia, 'through the Slavic land', and the context suggests that this teaching consists of reciting the Divine Office in Slavonic.⁵³ The pope urges the Dalmatian bishops, Slavic rulers and nobility to suppress this practice.

Upon arrival of the papal legates, the council was convoked at Spalatum. The ecclesiastical organization of Dalmatia and Croatia was a priority issue on its agenda. The council of 925 reaffirmed the primacy of the church of Spalatum, where the body of the Salonitan patron Domnius, a would-be disciple of the apostle Peter, had been previously translated. Spalatum, the council decreed, was the metropolitan centre in Dalmatia as well as in Croatia, and was the legitimate successor to ancient Salona.⁵⁴ This decision fitted into the ninth- and tenth-century European pattern of attributing the foundation of episcopal, especially metropolitan, sees to apostles and their disciples, and claiming primatial rights on the basis of apostolic succession.⁵⁵

Canons 11 and 12 of the council authorize the subordination of 'the bishop of the Croats', i.e. the bishop of Nona, to the archbishop of Spalatum.⁵⁶ In conciliar records Gregory of Nona occupies the third place after two seniors in the Dalmatian hierarchy – the archbishop of

⁵¹ CD I, 22, pp. 28–30; 24, pp. 33–5.

⁵² CD I, 24, p. 34.

⁵³ CD I, 22, pp. 29–30; 24, p. 34. Radoslav Katičić demonstrates that the *doctrina* is a key word in the letters of the pope, who even introduces *docere*, instead of *euangelizare*, in the quote from the Gospel (Galatians 1.8–9). Thus, he indicates that *Methodii doctrina* is a significant deviation from the teaching of the Roman church. Katičić sees the influence of John VIII's and Stephen V's letters regarding Archbishop Methodius' activity in Pannonia on John X's view: Katičić, 'Methodii doctrina', pp. 11–44, at pp. 14–16, 19–20.

⁵⁴ CD I, 23, p. 31.

⁵⁵ On apostolicity in the churches of northern Italy up to the tenth century, see J.-Ch. Picard, *Le souvenir des évêques: sépultures, listes épiscopales et culte des évêques en Italie du Nord des origines au Xe siècle* (Rome, 1988), esp. pp. 689–99; on the Dalmatian tradition, see Prozorov, 'The Passion of St. Domnius', pp. 219–39.

⁵⁶ CD I, 23, p. 32: 'Ut episcopus Croatorum, sicut nos omnes, nostre ecclesie metropolitane subesse se sciat.'

Spalatum and the bishop of Iadera.⁵⁷ Canon 12 warns that 'if the king or nobles of the Croats wish to lay claim to all the bishoprics of our metropolitan province for their own pontiff, then no bishop of our province will baptize, or consecrate churches or priests in the territory of their province'.⁵⁸ The Dalmatian clergy feared the involvement of *Rex* Tomislav and his aristocracy in support of the metropolitan claim of the bishop of Nona, but that evidently never happened.

The distinction between 'our metropolitan province' and 'their province' is vague. This was presumably an overlap of the ecclesiastical and political entities. The metropolitan province was undoubtedly an ecclesiastical unit comprising not only coastal Dalmatia but also the lands of the Croats, 'their province', since 'their' bishop was listed among the suffragans of the metropolitan church. At the same time, 'the province of the Croats', i.e. the Duchy (*Regnum*) of the Croats, was definitely differentiated from the 'confines of the Dalmatians', i.e. the 'cities of the Dalmatians' (*Dalmatiarum ciuitates*), in the preamble of the acts of the council.⁵⁹

Canon 12 seems to mean that the jurisdiction of the Dalmatian bishops, except the bishop of Nona, did not extend into the countryside. It stated that if the bishop of the Croats did not comply with the conciliar precepts, the other bishops would stop performing any church rite in the territory of the Croats, while 'just in their sees remaining available for a work of mercy'. And later, when the pope approved these decisions, he suggestively remarked concerning the authority of the Dalmatian bishops that 'a parish could not only be inside the walls of the city, but [should stretch] over the lands in the countryside, villages, landlords' homesteads and churches as well as among the people, [who had been] determined for it since ancient times'.⁶⁰ All these stipulations in canons 11 and 12 imply the presence of previous divisions and dissension in Dalmatia that had affected ecclesiastical organization.

The decisions were met with open disagreement by Bishop Gregory of Nona, who, as the short introduction to the postconciliar papal letter says, 'wishing to acquire the primacy over the bishops of Dalmatian

⁵⁷ CD I, 23, p. 32: 'Ioannes archiepiscopus primas Spaleto, Forminus, Gregorius ceterisque episcopis consulenter poposcerunt dictum uenerabilem papam . . . '.

⁵⁸ CD I, 23, p. 32: 'Quod si rex et procures Croatorum omnes diocesios episcoporum infra limite nostre metropolitane (!) suo cupiunt uindicare pontifici, nullus ex nostris per omnem prouinciam eorum neque regenerationes faciat neque ecclesias uel presbiteros consecrat, tam [tantum?] in suis sedibus commorantibus pro misericordie opus.'

⁵⁹ CD I, 23, p. 33: 'consulato peragente in prouintia Croatorum et Dalmatiarum finibus Tamisclao rege'.

⁶⁰ CD I, 27, p. 39: 'quia non potest parochia infra muros ciuitatis, sed per longinqua spatia terrarum in plebibus et villis et curtis et ecclesiis et in populo antiquitus determinato'.

cities, which he had not achieved before, directed his unjust objections against the said council to apostolic ears'.⁶¹ An anonymous composer of this text, who called Gregory 'our brother', was evidently right and the whole area of the metropolis of Salona never was under the jurisdiction of the bishop of the Croats. At least, the warning, addressed by the pope to Gregory, against controlling three dioceses together – i.e. those of Scardona (now Skradin),⁶² Siscia (Sisak)⁶³ and Delminium (in Duvno area)⁶⁴ – seems to confirm that the church of Nona de facto extended its jurisdiction over 'the province of the Croats', including only these dioceses (perhaps fragmentary).⁶⁵ It is also highly likely that at this time the ruins of Salona were situated in this province, under the supervision of the bishop of Nona, since the papal letter implies that the jurisdiction of the church of Spalatum was limited to the area 'only inside the walls of the city', i.e. within the former palace of Diocletian.⁶⁶ Constantine Porphyrogenitus also writes that 'in the country of these same Croats the palace and hippodromes of the emperor Diocletian are still preserved at the city of Salona'.⁶⁷

The postconciliar papal letter is the last document that mentions the title or position of archbishop of Salona; it was replaced by archbishop of Spalatum. John X, who wished to hear the arguments from both sides, invited Archbishop John of Spalatum or his proxy to come to Rome, together with Bishop Gregory of Nona.⁶⁸

It is unknown whether they visited the pope. However, in 928, another council was convoked at Spalatum with a papal envoy, Bishop Madalbert, present. He confirmed the boundaries of the Dalmatian dioceses and 'all episcopal privileges according to the ancient decrees for all churches'.⁶⁹

⁶¹ CD I, 25, p. 35: 'Sed cum terminare cuncta legitime antiquo more prestolaremur . . . fuit fratris nostri episcopi Nonensis, qui sibi vindicare cupiens primatum Dalmatiarum episcoporum, hoc quod non expediebat, contra dictam sinodum in auribus apostolicis iniustum iniecit certamine.'

⁶² B. Migotti, 'Ranokršćanska biskupija Scardona (Skradin)' [The Early Christian Episcopal See of Scardona (Skradin)], *Prilozi Instituta za arheologiju u Zagrebu* 9.1 (1992), pp. 101–12.

⁶³ H. Gračanin and G. Bilogrivić, 'Postrimski grad u južnoj Panoniji: primjer Siscije' [A Post-Roman Town in Southern Pannonia: An Example of Siscia], *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 32 (2014), pp. 1–26.

⁶⁴ D. Periša, 'Rimski Delminij kao sjedište starokršćanske biskupije' [Roman Delminium as an Early Christian Bishopric], *Arheološki radovi i rasprave* 16 (2009), pp. 225–46; *idem*, 'Ponovno o Delminijskoj biskupiji ili *Repetitio est mater studiorum*' [Again on the Bishopric of Delminium, or *Repetitio est mater studiorum*], *Hercegovina franciscana* 10 (2014), pp. 245–65.

⁶⁵ CD I, 26, p. 37.

⁶⁶ CD I, 27, pp. 38–9.

⁶⁷ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, 31.28–29, pp. 148–9.

⁶⁸ CD I, 25, pp. 35–6.

⁶⁹ CD I, 26, p. 37.

The metropolitan prerogatives were assigned to 'the church of Saint Domnius', that is, the successor to Salona – Spalatum.

The bishopric of Nona was completely abolished, since 'from ancient times the church of Nona had no bishop, but instead an archpriest under the supervision of the bishop'.⁷⁰ Thus, the Second Council implemented canon 2 of the previous synod.⁷¹ This canon itself refers to canon 6 of the Council of Serdica (342 or 343) which orders that a bishop should not be ordained in a village or small town, since there a priest could meet the needs of church and flock.⁷² According to the Second Council of Spalatum, an archpriest had been earlier assigned to the church of Nona. The bishop often entrusted the governance of baptismal churches, also designated as *plebes*, to rural archpriests.⁷³ The canon also envisages the situation in which a bishop, deprived of his see due to its smallness, can be transferred to a vacant one only by a common decision of the metropolitan and bishops of the province to which the diocese belongs. It is applied to Gregory of Nona's case.

Pope Leo VI (928) sanctioned these acts and in his letter to all the Dalmatian bishops, suffragans of the archbishop of Spalatum, urged them to obey their metropolitan and not to intrude into one another's dioceses. He approved that the archbishop of Spalatum should have his own diocese in the land of the Croats because the church of Salona had held it, and suggested that Gregory of Nona should occupy the see of Scardona. The pope granted the pallium to John of Spalatum.⁷⁴

Pope John X, probably uninformed about the details of the situation in Dalmatia, in an old-fashioned manner consistently called John of Spalatum 'archbishop of the holy church of Salona' ('sanctae Salonitanae ecclesiae archiepiscopus')⁷⁵ and never mentioned Spalatum,

⁷⁰ CD I, 26, p. 37: 'Nonensis uero ecclesia non episcopum antiquitus, sed archipresbiterum sub dictione episcopi habuisse cognoscitur.'

⁷¹ CD I, 23, p. 31: 'Ut in cunctis ecclesiis, in quibus supra recolitur episcopos habitasse, nunc autem clero, ordine et populis sufficiens adest infra diocesanos limites, episcopus habeatur; quia iuxta decreta patrum non licet in modicis ciuitatibus uel villis episcopos statui, ne nomen episcopi uilescat, et ut episcopus uacans uacantem diocesim cum consilio metropolitani et ceterorum episcoporum commune accipiat.'

⁷² *Concilium Serdicense*, c. 6, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* 3, ed. J.D. Mansi (Florence, 1759), col. 24. See also H. Hess, *The Early Development of Canon Law and the Council of Serdica* (Oxford and New York, 2002), pp. 154–7.

⁷³ For example, the synod of Pavia in 850 decreed that every bishop had to supervise such archpriests in rural parishes (*plebania*): *Additamenta ad capitularia Hlotharii I*, no. 228, c. 6, *MGH Capit.* 2 (Hanover, 1897), p. 118. There is also a chapter in the capitulary of Ravenna issued in 898 by Lambert II (of Spoleto, emperor 892–8): 'Ut singulae plebes archipresbyterum habeant', *Capitulare Lamberti*, no. 225, c. 12, *MGH Capit.* 2, p. 110. On the archpriest, see A. Amanieu, 'Archiprêtre', *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*, ed. R. Naz (Paris, 1935), vol. 2, pp. 1004–26.

⁷⁴ CD I, 27, pp. 38–9.

⁷⁵ CD I, 22, p. 29; 24, p. 34; 25, p. 35.

while the acts of the councils name him archbishop of Spalatum ('archiepiscopus primus Spaletus').⁷⁶ Later, fully aware of the contentious events in the Dalmatian province, Pope Leo referred to John of Spalatum as 'archbishop of the holy church of Spalatum' ('sanctae Spalatensis ecclesiae archiepiscopus').⁷⁷ From that time on, the metropolitans of Dalmatia were styled 'archbishop of Spalatum',⁷⁸ and thus the transfer of the metropolitan see from Salona to Spalatum was finally settled.

The councils of Spalatum, whose decisions were sanctioned by the pope, resolved the dispute between the two claimants to metropolitan rank in favour of the bishop of Spalatum. The bishopric of Nona lost even its episcopal status. The integrity of the ecclesiastical province of Dalmatia was restored after a period in which its episcopal sees had remained in the Byzantine empire, and its hinterland, constituting the Duchy of the Croats, had been under Carolingian supreme authority. The separate diocese of the 'bishop of the Croats' had been ruled by the bishop of Nona. In the 920s, the Franks ceased to influence Balkan areas, the Byzantine presence was almost nonexistent, and Rome restored the ecclesiastical unity of Dalmatia and its own jurisdiction over the eastern Adriatic. The metropolitan centre of the province was officially moved from ruined Salona to nearby Spalatum.

This interpretation is based on the documents whose manuscripts date from a rather late period, and therefore any additional argument for its plausibility is important. Undoubtedly, a contemporary analogous case of restoring the integrity of a church province would affirm the likelihood of such a procedure for settling these kinds of disputes. And indeed, there was a famous rivalry between two claimants to the metropolitan see of Aquileia, the province bordered by Dalmatia.

The quest for metropolitan status: following the Aquileian precedent?

When Aquileia, being in schism with Rome over the Three Chapters controversy, was conquered by the Lombards in 568, the Venice lagoon and Istria, parts of the Aquileian ecclesiastical province, remained under Byzantine rule.⁷⁹ The bishop of Aquileia transferred his residence and

⁷⁶ CD I, 23, p. 32, n. 1; 26, p. 37.

⁷⁷ CD I, 27, p. 38.

⁷⁸ CD I, 32 (9 February 994), p. 47; 72 (1066), p. 101; 125 (1078), p. 160.

⁷⁹ C. Sotinel, 'The Three Chapters and the Transformations of Italy', and C. Azzara, 'Il regno longobardo in Italia e i Tre Capitoli', in C. Chazelle and C. Cubitt (eds), *The Crisis of the Oikoumene: The Three Chapters and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth-Century Mediterranean* (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 84–120 and pp. 208–22.

the bodies of the martyrs and saints to the island of Grado, 'new Aquileia', in the Byzantine area.⁸⁰

After this turmoil, the upper and east Adriatic traditions accredit the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (610–41) with the restoration of the ecclesiastical provinces. He is mentioned in the context of the metropolitan tradition of Grado. After the debatable council under Bishop Elias of Grado (571–86) established the see of Grado as the metropolis of Venetia, 'in support of this decision, Heraclius . . . sent there the throne of the most blessed Mark, previously brought from Alexandria by Helena, Constantine's mother'.⁸¹ Constantine Porphyrogenitus narrates that the metropolitan organization was restored in Dalmatia, when newcomers, the Slavs, were christened in the early seventh century on the initiative of Heraclius.⁸²

In 607, a schism and the election of two candidates to the see of Aquileia (Grado) split its clergy into two parties, one of which stayed in Grado; the other, defending the Three Chapters (until the Council of Pavia in c.698),⁸³ returned to the Lombard-held areas. This group established its residence in Cormons, moving later – in 737 – to Forum Iulii (Cividale). Thus, the rivalry began for the succession to the metropolitan ('patriarchal') see of Aquileia between, on the one hand, Byzantine Grado, and, on the other, Lombard Cormons-Cividale.⁸⁴

The papacy accepted the division of the province of Aquileia as a fait accompli. Acknowledging partition, Pope Gregory II sent the pallium to Serenus of Aquileia (Cormons) in 723 and prohibited him from intruding into the lands beyond the boundaries of the Lombard areas.⁸⁵ The conquest of Istria by the Lombards in 769⁸⁶ extended the sway of Cividale over the local episcopal sees previously part of the province of

⁸⁰ Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* II.10, ed. L. Bethman and G. Waitz, *MGH SRL* (Hanover, 1878), p. 78; Giovanni, *Istoria* I.4, p. 52; *Chronica de singulis patriarchis novae Aquileiae*, ll. 10–12, *Cronache*, ed. G. Fedalto and L.A. Berto, *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiae aquileiensis 12: Concili e cronache 2* (Rome and Gorizia, 2003), p. 184. On this subject, see C. Sotinel, *Identité civique et christianisme. Aquilée du IIIe au VIe siècle* (Rome, 2005), pp. 323–70; E. Colombi, 'Storie di cronache e reliquie: la nascita del patriarcato di Grado nelle prime cronache veneziane', *Cristianesimo nella storia* 31 (2010), pp. 761–807.

⁸¹ Giovanni, *Istoria* I.4, p. 52: 'Ad cuius roborem Heraclius post haec augustus beatissimi Marci sedem, quam dudum Helena Constantini mater de Alexandria tulerat . . . direxit.'

⁸² Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, 31.21–4, pp. 148–9.

⁸³ *Carmen de synodo Ticinensi*, ed. L. Bethmann, *MGH SRL* (Hanover, 1878), pp. 189–91, and *MGH Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini* 4.2, ed. K. Strecker (Berlin, 1923), no. 145, pp. 728–31.

⁸⁴ Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* VI.51, pp. 182–3; P. Cammarosano, 'Aquileia e Grado nell'Alto Medioevo', in M.M. Roberti (ed.), *Aquileia e l'Alto Adriatico* (Udine, 1990), pp. 129–55.

⁸⁵ Pope Gregory II, *Epistolae Langobardicae*, 7, ed. W. Gundlach, *MGH Epistolae* 3 (Berlin, 1899), p. 699. See also Gregory II's letter to Donatus of Grado, the bishops, Duke Marcellus, and the people of Venetia and Istria in *Epistolae Langobardicae*, 9, p. 700.

⁸⁶ John of Grado's letter to Pope Stephen III, *Epistolae Langobardicae*, 19, p. 712, ll. 28–30.

Byzantine Grado, since the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Cividale remained coterminous with the Lombard territories (later the Carolingian march)⁸⁷ in north-eastern Italy.

Bishop ('Patriarch') Fortunatus of Grado, being again in charge of not only Venetia but also Istria (*Venetiarum et Istriensium patriarcha*), and obtaining the pallium from Pope Leo III in 803,⁸⁸ also in 803 secured two privileges from Charlemagne.⁸⁹ Fortunatus' successor, Venerius, sought their confirmation from Louis the Pious in 826–7.⁹⁰

After the conclusion of the treaty of Aachen between the Frankish and Byzantine emperors in 812, both metropolitan bishops of Cividale and Grado found themselves in the Carolingian empire. The so-called testament of Charlemagne mentioned the sees of Forum Iulii (Cividale) and Grado, avoiding the contested name of Aquileia.⁹¹ However, old Aquileia was not forgotten by the contestants themselves. In 811, Fortunatus' opponent, Maxentius of Cividale, informed Charlemagne that he was going 'to rebuild and repair the see of Aquileia to its previous glory with the help' of the emperor, and asked Charlemagne to grant it property.⁹²

For Charlemagne and his heirs, the metropolitan system that gave the metropolitan superiority over his provincial bishops was one of the constituent elements of the imperial regime.⁹³ Therefore the Carolingians were interested in restoring the metropolitan integrity of Aquileia. The controversy over Aquileian jurisdiction was submitted for settlement to the council convoked by Maxentius at Mantua in June 827.⁹⁴ His opponent, Bishop Venerius of Grado, did not come.

⁸⁷ The Frankish army put an end to the Lombard kingdom in 774. Einhard writes that Charlemagne incorporated Istria in his kingdom (perhaps in 788, and definitely until 791): Éginhard, *Vie de Charlemagne*, c. 15, ed. L. Halphen (Paris, 1923), p. 44. See P. Štih, 'Imperial Politics and Its Regional Consequences: Istria between Byzantium and the Franks 788–812', in Ančić et al. (eds), *Imperial Spheres*, pp. 57–72.

⁸⁸ *Documenti relativi alla storia di Venezia anteriore al mille I* (secoli V–IX), no. 37, ed. R. Cessi (Padua, 1942), pp. 56–8.

⁸⁹ *MGH DK I*, nos. 200–1, ed. A. Dopsch, J. Lechner, M. Tangl and E. Mühlbacher (Hanover, 1906), pp. 269–70.

⁹⁰ *Epistolae variorum*, II, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epistolae 5* (Berlin, 1899), pp. 314–15.

⁹¹ Éginhard, *Vie de Charlemagne*, c. 33, p. 96. See H. Krahwinkel, 'The Church(es) of Aquileia, Friuli and Istria at the Time of the *Riziano Placitum*', *Acta Histriae* 9 (2001), pp. 65–72.

⁹² *MGH DK I*, no. 214, p. 286: 'Maxentius patriarcha serenitati nostrae suggestit, eo quod sedem, quae in Aquilegia civitate priscis temporibus constructa fuerat et ob metum vel perfidiam Gothorum et Avarorum seu ceterarum nationum derelicta ac destituta hactenus remanserat, diebus nostris divini amoris face accensus Christo protegente una cum nostro adiutorio construere atque reparare ad pristinum honorem cupiebat.'

⁹³ É. Lesne, *La hiérarchie épiscopale provinces, métropolitains, primats en Gaule et Germanie depuis la réforme de saint Boniface jusqu'à la mort d'Hincmar 742–882* (Lille and Paris, 1905), pp. 57–107, 124–45; M. Schrör, *Metropolitangewalt und papstgeschichtliche Wende* (Husum, 2009), pp. 33–87.

⁹⁴ *Concilium Mantuanum*, *MGH Concilia* 2.2, ed. A. Werminghoff (Hanover and Leipzig, 1906), pp. 583–9.

Documents that can now not be identified but that supported the pretensions of the Aquileian church were disclosed in the presence of papal and imperial legates and the majority of the bishops of the Italian kingdom, including the metropolitans of Milan and Ravenna. Maxentius stressed that 'the church of Aquileia had been founded in the faith of Christ before all the churches of Italy by blessed Mark the Evangelist, a spiritual and most beloved son of St Peter the Apostle out of the sacred womb of the font, and by most elegant Hermagoras'.⁹⁵ It was decided that metropolitan power should belong to the bishop of Cividale:

Let Maxentius, patriarch of Holy Aquileian church, and his successors now and in the future have freedom to ordain bishops elected by the clergy and the people in every church of Istria, as well as in the other cities of their metropolitan province, because long ago [the church of Aquileia] was the first one and was considered the metropolis.⁹⁶

Venerius of Grado appealed to Pope Gregory IV (827–44) against the decision.⁹⁷ Pope Sergius II (844–47) admitted that this dispute would not be resolved without convening a new council and securing Emperor Lothar's consent.⁹⁸ Most likely, the new council was never called and, in October 855, Emperor Louis II decreed that 'the bishop of Aquileia, or Forum Iulii, would all the time, without any contradiction and obstruction, possess the patriarchal and metropolitan dignity in order to ordain the bishops of Istria and to administer their churches'.⁹⁹ The

⁹⁵ *Concilium Mantuanum*, p. 585: Nos, qui veritate perfecta invenimus a beato evangelista Marco, qui spiritualis et ex sacro fontis utero ac carissimus sancti Petri apostoli fuit filius, necnon ab elegantissimo Hermachora Aquileiensem aecclesiam pre omnibus Italiae in Christi fide prius fundatam esse et pastorem ibi semper curam servatam et sanctorum apostolorum sanctae Romanae aecclesiae doctrinis imbutam atque ipsam semper eius fuisse discipulum et peculiarem ac vicariam in omnibus.' On the hagiographic argumentation, see G. Vocino, 'Under the Aegis of the Saints. Hagiography and Power in Early Carolingian Northern Italy', *EME* 22.1 (2014), pp. 26–52, at p. 33 (English translation of the passage); M. Cerno, 'Holding the Aquileian Patriarchate's Title: The Key Role of Local Early Ninth-Century Hagiography', in Ančić *et al.* (eds), *Imperial Spheres*, pp. 140–51.

⁹⁶ *Concilium Mantuanum*, p. 587: 'Aquileia metropolis, quae contra patrum statute divisa in duos metropolitanos fuerat, deinceps secundum quod et antiquitus erat prima et metropolis habebatur et Maxentius, sanctae Aquileiensis aecclesiae patriarcha, eiusque successores in singulis Histriae aecclesiis electos a clero et populo ordinandi in episcopos licentiam sicut et in caeteris civitatibus suae metropoli subiectis modo et futuris temporibus habeant.'

⁹⁷ *Epistolae variorum*, 12, *MGH Epistolae* 5, pp. 315–16.

⁹⁸ *Epistolae selectae Pontificum Romanorum*, 2, ed. A. von Hirsch-Gereuth, *MGH Epistolae* 5, pp. 584–5.

⁹⁹ *Ludovici II. Diplomata*, no. 17, *MGH DK* 4, ed. K. Wanner (Munich, 1994), p. 99: 'in perpetuum sancimus, ut antistes Aquilegensis sive Foroiuliensis omni tempore patriarchalem et metropolitanam dignitatem in ordinandis regendisque Istriae episcopis et ecclesiis absque ullius omnino contradictione et interpellatione possideat'.

bishop of Grado's jurisdiction was reduced to the lagoon of Venice, and in the early twelfth century his residence was moved to Venice.¹⁰⁰

The paradigm presented in this article by which metropolitan status was secured for the see of Spalatum has parallels in the contest between Grado and Cividale. Could the church of Spalatum have employed certain Aquileian strategies to maintain its rights in Dalmatia?

In the early Middle Ages Aquileia influenced Dalmatia and the Duchy of the Croats in various ways. The impact of Aquileian and northern Italian style is evident in Dalmatian art.¹⁰¹ The ninth-century Croatian dukes made pilgrimages to Aquileia, to the monastery in San Canzian d'Isonzo, and the *Gospel Book of Cividale* (*Codex aquileiensis*) preserves their names between the lines of the Gospel of St Mark.¹⁰² The cults of Aquileian saints had spread to Dalmatia before the early tenth century. Chrysogonus was venerated in Zadar as its holy patron,¹⁰³ as well as, presumably, among the Croats.¹⁰⁴ Anastasius, whose *Passio* is in part related to the late antique Aquileian textual tradition, is one of the patrons of Spalatum.¹⁰⁵ There are also traces of the Aquileian cults of Sts Donatus, Hermogenes and Fortunatus in Spalatum.¹⁰⁶

The two Adriatic churches developed their own traditions of apostolic succession. They were associated with St Hermagoras, a disciple of St Mark the Evangelist, in Aquileia, and with St Domnius, a disciple of St Peter the Apostle, in Salona (later in Spalatum).¹⁰⁷ The Marcan tradition dates back to the period between the sixth and late eighth

¹⁰⁰ T.F. Madden, *Enrico Dandolo and the Rise of Venice* (Baltimore and London, 2003), pp. 19–38.

¹⁰¹ P. Vežić, *Zadar na pragu kršćanstva: Arhitektura ranoga kršćanstva u Zadru i na zadarskom području* [Zadar on the Threshold of Christianity: Early Christian Architecture in Zadar and Its Region] (Zadar, 2006); N. Jakšić, 'Riflessi della "rinascenza liutprandea" nei centri urbani della costa Adriatica orientale', *Hortus artium medievalium* 16 (2010), pp. 17–26; I. Basić, 'New Evidence', pp. 271–7.

¹⁰² A. Cronia, 'Revisione dei nomi slavi nell'antico *Codex Aquileiensis*', *Studi Aquileiesi offerti il 7 Ottobre 1953 a Giovanni Brusin nel suo 70. compleanno* (Aquileia, 1953), pp. 357–71; U. Ludwig, *Transalpine Beziehungen der Karolingerzeit im Spiegel der Memorialüberlieferung: Prosopographische und sozialgeschichtliche Studien unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Liber vitae von San Salvatore in Brescia und des Evangeliers von Cividale* (Hanover, 1999), pp. 175–7, 218–26, 271.

¹⁰³ T. Vedriš, 'Memoria S. Chrysogoni: Between the Legend on the Transfer of Relics and Ownership over Monastic Land', in I. Benyovsky Latin *et al.* (eds), *Towns and Cities of the Croatian Middle Ages: Authority and Property* (Zagreb, 2014), pp. 509–34.

¹⁰⁴ T. Vedriš, 'Nekoliko opažanja o začetima štovanja sv. Krševana u Dalmaciji u ranome srednjem vijeku' [Some Observations on the Beginning of the Cult of Saint Chrysogonus in Dalmatia in the Early Middle Ages], in I. Basić *et al.* (eds), *Spalatumque Dedit Ortum* (Split, 2014), pp. 197–222.

¹⁰⁵ Egger, 'Die Passio Sancti Anastasii', pp. 131–8; M. Jarak, 'Passio Sancti Anastasii Martyris', *Opuscula archaeologica* 21 (1997), pp. 151–65.

¹⁰⁶ A. Niero, 'Santi Aquileiesi e Veneti in Dalmazia', in *Aquileia, la Dalmazia e l'Ilirico* (Udine, 1985), pp. 261–88, at pp. 275–86.

¹⁰⁷ *Passio Hermachorae et Fortunati*, ed. P. Chiesa, *Le passioni dei martiri aquileiesi e istriani*, ed. E. Colombi (Rome 2008), vol. 1, pp. 171–88.

centuries, when the Aquileian claim to metropolitan status was backed by the Franks. In c.784, Paul the Deacon, a native of Cividale, writes concerning the Italian churches established by the apostles, that St Peter dispatched his disciples to important cities, and Mark, together with Hermagoras, presided over the church of Aquileia before the departure of the evangelist to Alexandria.¹⁰⁸ A passage echoing Paul the Deacon's text also appears in the *Passio* of St Domnius in Salona-Spalatum, and lists Domnius among the evangelizers recruited by St Peter.¹⁰⁹

Such a tradition of apostolic foundation of a church was usually one of the weighty arguments in favour of its metropolitan prerogatives. The councils at Mantua and Spalatum regarded the apostolic legends inserted in the *Passiones* of their holy patrons, Hermagoras and Domnius, as the basis of Aquileia's and Spalatum's claims to apostolic succession and metropolitan authority.¹¹⁰ In this respect, the difference between them is that the relics of Domnius were deposited in victorious Spalatum in the time of the councils, while the remains of Hermagoras were in Grado, which lost its case, then were probably brought back to Aquileia under Patriarch Poppo (1019–42).¹¹¹

The decisions of the councils regarding the authority of the metropolitans reveal similarities. The Council of Mantua states in 827: 'Let Maxentius and his successors now and in the future have freedom

¹⁰⁸ Paul the Deacon, *Liber de episcopi Mettensibus*, ed. G.H. Pertz, *MGH SS* 2 (Hanover, 1829), p. 261: 'Igitur cum Romam pervenisset . . . optimos eruditosque viros ex suo consortio direxit. Tunc denique Apollinarem Ravennam, Leucium Brundisium, Anatolium Mediolanum misit. Marcum vero, qui praecipuus inter eius discipulos habebatur, Aquilegiam destinavit, quibus cum Hermagoram, suum comitem, Marcus praefecisset, ad beatum Petrum reversus, ab eo nihilominus, Alexandriam missus est.'

¹⁰⁹ *HSM*, p. 73: 'Ubi beatus Petrus multis iam ad fidem Chrysti conversis alias quoque orbis terre partes ab erroris pernicietie liberare cupiens, Pancratium destinavit in Siciliam, Apollinarem Ravenam, Marcum evangelistam Aquilegiam, Domnium vero multis coram positus dixit . . .'

¹¹⁰ Recent scholarship agrees that the *Passio* of Saint Hermagoras was written in the seventh to eighth centuries, and sees in *BHL* 3838 its oldest version, with the prologue – which made Hermagoras a disciple of the apostle Mark and a bishop ordained by the apostle Peter – added in the early ninth century. See *Passio Hermachorae et Fortunati*, pp. 133–99. The various versions of the *Passio* of St Domnius extant in the fifteenth- to seventeenth-century manuscripts are published in Farlati, *Illyricum*, pp. 412–27; *HSM*, pp. 73–5 (*BHL* 2269); S. Gioanni, 'La "Vita Domnii" d'Adam de Paris (XIe siècle). La construction d'un lien hagiographique entre l'église de Split et le siège de Rome', *Hagiographica* 19 (2012), pp. 83–126, at pp. 122–6 (*BHL* 2268); *Passio s. Domnionis*, ed. M. Černo, *Le Passioni dei martiri aquileiesi e istriani*, ed. Colombi, vol. 2, pp. 901–60 (*BHL* 2270). Most scholars who have dealt with this 'apostolic' legend of St Domnius, have placed its appearance in the ninth or tenth century, although its plot, most probably without any reference to Domnius' apostolicity and episcopal dignity, matches the late antique paradigm. See H. Delehaye, 'Saints d'Istrie et de Dalmatie', *Analecta bollandiana* 18 (1899), pp. 369–411, at pp. 402–3; Gioanni, 'La Vita Domnii', pp. 83–126.

¹¹¹ V. Joppi, 'Le sacre reliquie della chiesa patriarcale d'Aquileia. Memorie e documenti', *Archivio storico per Trieste, l'Istria e il Trentino* (1884–6), pp. 195–223, at pp. 197–8.

to ordain bishops . . . in the cities of their metropolitan province, because long ago [the church of Aquileia] was the first one and was considered the metropolis.' Canon 1 of the Council of Spalatum echoes in 925: 'Since long ago blessed Domnius . . . arranged that this church . . . should have primacy . . . in this province and legitimately acquire the name of the metropolis . . . therefore, at the command of its bishops . . . consecration of the bishops shall be celebrated.'

The Councils of Mantua and Spalatum both located and considered some ancient documents relating to the ecclesiastical structure of the provinces of, respectively, Aquileia and Salona. These 'most truthful records' served as the basis for taking the final decisions.¹¹² In the case of Dalmatia, Pope Leo VI writes in his letter:

After closely examining all the ancient customs of the province together with those who were there, [the papal envoy] decided to renew all the privileges of the bishops in all churches according to the ancient statutes so that the church of St Domnius, as from the beginning, possesses primacy and acts canonically within the limits of the diocese.¹¹³

These documents may have included grant charters conferred by rulers, several of which are extant. Charlemagne gave Patriarch Fortunatus of Grado and his successors immunity for the ecclesiastical people and lands under their jurisdiction 'in Istria, Romandiola [former Byzantine Exarchate] seu in Longobardia'.¹¹⁴ The Croat ruler and Frankish subject Duke Trpimir confirmed the rights of the 'archbishop of the church of Salona' (Spalatum in this case) Peter and his successors over the church property and revenues in the 'royal' lands of the Croats.¹¹⁵ Both charters name (for the first time in the Aquileian and Dalmatian official documents) the holy guarantors of metropolitan status of the churches with apostolic backgrounds: Sts Mark and Hermagoras, in Grado, and St Domnius in Spalatum.

In both Aquileia and Dalmatia, one of the rival sides (associated with the Franks), in whose territory a run-down metropolis stood, attempted to repair its status, and afterwards applied to the pope for the pallium. In Aquileia it was Maxentius of Cividale. In the case of Dalmatia, in

¹¹² *Concilium Mantuanum*, p. 587: 'auctoritatesque veracissimas, quae in hac synodo propalatae sunt'.

¹¹³ CD I, 26, p. 37: 'Cum quibus residens, cuncta prouintie antike consuetudinis iusto moderamine perscrutans firmavit omnia secundum ueterum statuta in omnibus ecclesiis episcoporum priuilegia redintegrari ita dumtaxat, ut ecclesia sancti Domnii, sicut ab initio, primum obtineat et intra limites diocesei sui (!) cuncta canonice peragat.'

¹¹⁴ *MGH DK* I, no. 200, p. 269. See also *MGH DK* I, no. 201, p. 270.

¹¹⁵ CD I, 3, pp. 4–6.

887/8, after having restored the former metropolitan province of Salona, Bishop Theodosius of Nona, as archbishop of Salona, asked the pope to send him the pallium. In this context Pope Stephen V writes: 'We wish very much that the church of Salona, which, as you say, has been restored with the help of God, should return to its previous standing. And we implore . . . that all the churches, which were destroyed by the fury of the barbarians, will be restored.'¹¹⁶ This evidence can be interpreted as if Theodosius, whose jurisdiction as the bishop of Nona was de facto coterminous with the Croat duchy and spread over the remains of ancient Salona, attempted to re-establish the archbishopric on the old site and to claim metropolitan prerogatives in Dalmatia. He was consecrated archbishop by Patriarch Walpert of Aquileia, one of Maxentius' successors, who had undertaken renovation work at old Aquileia and triumphed at the Council of Mantua.

In both cases two weighty arguments were set forth at the councils against the weaker parties. Firstly, their status did not allow them to lay claim to metropolitan jurisdiction. The aforementioned canon (6) of the Council of Serdica (342 or 343) served as a legal basis for the denial of such claims: Grado and Nona viewed as *plebes* (the 'tiny island' of Grado¹¹⁷ and the 'small town' of Nona¹¹⁸) were not even worthy of episcopal status. Secondly, the opponents of the bishops of Aquileia-Cividale and Salona-Spalatum were charged with unorthodoxy and heresy. The Aquileian party recalled the schismatic and heretical (Three Chapters) position of Candidianus, the first patriarch of Grado, and thus presented this see as a heretical foundation.¹¹⁹ In Dalmatia, the unacceptable *Methodii doctrina*, i.e. celebration of the liturgy in Slavonic, was said to be widespread, and those who raised this issue in the letters to Pope John X were obviously taking aim against the bishop of Nona, whose pastoral care embraced the Slavic-speaking Croats.¹²⁰

The victory was won by those who initiated the councils and had both the support of the authorities in these regions and also the pope, who was eager to safeguard his jurisdiction in these parts of the Adriatic. Both metropolitan sees deployed the legend of their apostolic foundation, provided written documents (passions of the proto-bishops and charters issued by secular rulers), and blamed the weaker sides for their

¹¹⁶ Stephen V, *Fragmenta* 30, p. 351: 'Salonitana ecclesia, quam deo auxiliante restitutam asseris, ut [ad] pristinum gradum redeat, inhiante cupimus; et omnes ecclesiae, quae barbarorum rabie destructae sunt, assiduis precibus, ut restaurentur, imploramus, ita tamen ut in novarum ecclesiarum restauratione neglectus non proveniat antiquarum.'

¹¹⁷ *Concilium Mantuanum*, p. 586: 'plebem Aquileiensem Gradus, quae est perparva insula'.

¹¹⁸ CD I, 23, p. 31.

¹¹⁹ *Concilium Mantuanum*, p. 586.

¹²⁰ CD I, 22, pp. 29–30; 24, p. 34.

inadequate status and heretical practices. The ecclesiastical and secular authorities of the Carolingian empire promoted the interests of the bishop of Frankish Aquileia (Cividale) in the dispute with Byzantine Grado, and sought to regain control of the dioceses on the border between Italy and the Balkans. In Dalmatia, the bishop of Nona, the bishop of the Duchy of the Croats under Carolingian suzerainty, started to claim metropolitan rights in the late 870s. It was then that Pope John VIII expressed regret about the estrangement of Dalmatian cities from Rome. Therefore it is not surprising that the bishop of the diocese within the Croat duchy, which was under the supreme authority of the Franks – who were loyal to Rome – attempted to acquire metropolitan power in Dalmatia with the help of the patriarch of Frankish Aquileia. In the late 920s, the situation changed after the influence of the Frankish empire in the Balkans faded, while the Byzantine presence here was ephemeral; the Councils of Spalatum ended the conflict between the bishops of Nona and Spalatum. Seeking to preserve its jurisdiction over Dalmatia, the papacy entrusted the bishop of Spalatum with the task of maintaining the integrity of the province. The appeals to Rome against the conciliar decisions failed. Finally, the bishops of Aquileia and Spalatum were confirmed as metropolitans, and the dioceses torn away from their metropolitan sees due to political and ecclesiastical circumstances – i.e. three bishoprics of Istria in the province of Aquileia and three bishoprics in Dalmatia – were respectively re-incorporated in their ancient provinces.

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